

## Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 104072

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
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EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLL REPEAT BANGKOK 8033 ACTION SECSTATE 05 MAY 75:

QUOTE

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3  
TAGS: MASS, TH  
SUBJ: CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE MAP AND MASF ASSETS

SUMMARY: DISPOSITION OF VIETNAMESE MASF ASSETS CONTINUES TO DOMINATE PUBLIC ATTENTION HERE, BUT RTG, ITS SPINE OBVIOUSLY STIFFENED BY THAI MILITARY, SEEMS TO HAVE PULLED ITSELF TOGETHER AND IS ADMITTING THAT ASSETS BELONG TO U.S. WHILE THIS TAKES SOME HEAT OFF, REMOVAL FROM THAILAND OF F-5'S, A-37'S, ETC., SHOULD CONTINUE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE CONSISTENT WITH SAFE HANDLING. OUTLOADING OPERATIONS WILL BE SUSPENDED DURING MEDIA VISIT TO UTAPAO OF SEVERAL HOURS DURATION MAY 6, AT INSISTENCE OF SUPREME COMMAND. END SUMMARY.

1. THE QUESTION OF DISPOSITION OF THE VIETNAMESE MASF ASSETS IN THAILAND, ALMOST ENTIRELY AIRCRAFT, CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE HEADLINES HERE. HANOI AND THE PRG ARE USING SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 104072

THESE ASSETS TO APPLY PRESSURE, EXPLOITING OF CLEARLY EMERGENT THAI DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM. ACCORDING TO PRESS, FOREIGN MINISTER OF PRG HAS SENT NOTE TO THAI FOREIGN MINISTER LAYING CLAIM TO VIETNAMESE MASF ASSETS BROUGHT TO THAILAND. THIS DEMAND, ACCORDING PRESS, WAS REINFORCED BY A RENELED INTERVENTION FROM

HANOI, WHICH REPORTEDLY HAS "FORMALLY REQUESTED" RETURN OF PLANES BY THAILAND TO SOUTH VIETNAM, POINTING OUT THAT ISSUE COULD AFFECT BANGKOK-HANOI RELATIONS. SIDE BY SIDE WITH THIS STORY ON FRONT PAGE OF BANGKOK "THE NATION" IS REPORT THAT THAI NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IS RECOMMENDING IMMEDIATE THAI RECOGNITION OF NORTH VIETNAM AND HINTING THAT RECOGNITION OF THE NEW REGIME IN SAIGON IS ALSO IMMINENT.

2. DESPITE THESE DEVELOPMENTS, RTG SEEMS TO HAVE PULLED ITSELF TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE ON ISSUE OF DISPOSITION OF VN MASF ASSETS. PRIME MINISTER KUKRIT PRAMOT TOLD THE PRESS YESTERDAY THAT THAILAND WOULD "HAND OVER" THESE ASSETS TO THE U.S. WHILE A FINAL DECISION ON THAILAND'S POSITION TOWARDS THESE ASSETS IS REPORTEDLY TO BE MADE AT A CABINET MEETING TUESDAY, MAY 6, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE THAI MILITARY, THROUGH SUPREME COMMAND, HAS SUCCEEDED IN SUPPRESSING FOR THE MOMENT ANY CONSIDERATION OF HANDING OVER VIETNAMESE OR CAMBODIAN ASSETS TO NEW COMMUNIST REGIMES. IN ACHIEVING THIS RESULT, SUPREME COMMAND WAS UNDOUBTEDLY GIVEN A KEY INSTRUMENT IN THE FORM OF OUR DECISION TO OFFER CONSIDERABLE ASSETS TO THE THAI. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WE CONVEYED NEWS OF THIS TO KRIANGSAK IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF AUTHORITY FROM WASHINGTON.

3. DISPOSITION OF THE FORMER VIETNAMESE ASSETS IS LIKELY TO REMAIN A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE HERE. IF HANOI AND SAIGON REACT SHARPLY, THOSE THAI WHO ARE PRESSING MOST URGENTLY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THEM CAN BE EXPECTED TO BELABOR THE RTG HEAVILY. THE RTG, WHILE WE EXPECT IT TO STICK TO ITS CURRENT POSITION, WILL SEEK, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO PUT THE BLAME ON US. IT THEREFORE CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT THAT WE REMOVE THOSE ASSETS THAT WE ARE TAKING OUT OF THAILAND AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE, CONSISTENT WITH

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 104072

THEIR CONSERVATION.

4. IN RESPONSE TO EXTREME PRESSURE FROM THE THAI PRESS ACCOMPANIED BY MUCH FLAG-WAVING, KRIANGSAK FEELS IT ESSENTIAL THAT A MEDIA VISIT TO UTAPAO BE CONDUCTED TOMORROW (MAY 6). THIS MEDIA VISIT, IN WHICH WE WILL ALSO INCLUDE FOREIGN PRESS, IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPORTING THE DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST PLANELOAD OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES AT APPROXIMATELY 1100 LOCAL TIME. KRIANGSAK WISHES MOVEMENT OF THE OUTBOUND VNAF AIRCRAFT TO BE SUSPENDED DURING THE DURATION OF THE MEDIA VISIT AND WE AGREE THAT THIS IS A GOOD IDEA.

5. THE PRESS WILL ARRIVE AT UTAPAO AT 0900 LOCAL TIME MAY 6 AND WILL REMAIN FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS. DURING THAT

TIME, THERE SHOULD BE NO VISIBLE MOVEMENT OR PROCESSING  
OF VNAF F-5'S, A-37'S OR OTHER VNAF AIRCRAFT BEING  
TAKEN OUT OF THAILAND. PROCESSING CAN BE RESUMED AS  
SOON AS THE MEDIA DEPART FROM THE BASE.  
MASTEERS UNQUOTE

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